

Mr. Spence Wilson, Jr.
swilsonjr@kwilson.com
Chairman's Circle
Greater Memphis Chamber
22 North Front, Suite 200
Memphis, TN 38103

VIA EMAIL:

Dear Spence:

As reflected in the most recent census estimate, our community has witnessed a net loss in population for five straight years while other parts of the state continue to grow.

We think you will agree that the two keys to growth in (1) more and better jobs, (2) our tax base, and (3) our population are less crime and better schools/training. The Chamber's economic development efforts are tied directly to progress on these fronts. Mayor Strickland has stated correctly that violent crime is our community's biggest challenge and one that affects progress in other areas.

Reducing crime is multifaceted and involves many stakeholders, some of which do not naturally play well together. The Memphis Shelby Crime Commission is the **ONLY** entity that (1) has brought all the major public stakeholders plus members of the business, faith, and social service communities to the table to work together to devise an evidenced-based, evidenced-informed plan to reduce crime, (2) has a structure and process in place to oversee implementation of the plan and hold stakeholders accountable, and (3) has an arrangement with the University of Memphis to evaluate both implementation of the plan and its impact as implemented.

Simply put, there is no other entity responsible for overseeing development, implementation, and evaluation of a true community-wide plan to reduce crime.

After spearheading its development of a new five-year Operation: Safe Community crime plan (2017-2012), the Crime Commission is now taking the lead in moving us forward in implementing the plan.

One year into the plan, we are making progress on many fronts, including:

1. The hiring and retention of more Memphis police officers, with 169 new commissioned officers hired within the past year and 85 percent of eligible officers signing retention agreements coupled with retention bonuses;
2. A renewed and ramped up commitment by the Memphis Police Department to deploy its resources in a data-driven manner in order to have the maximum positive impact on the level of crime;
3. Implementation of the D.A.'s community prosecution model in three MPD precincts to strengthen partnerships among citizens, law enforcement, and prosecutors;
4. Enactment of state legislation imposing tougher sentences for convicted felons possessing guns along with the launch of the FED UP. GUN CRIME. MAX TIME communications effort to convey the consequences of engaging in gun crime in an effort to change behavior;

5. Development of an assessment center model to direct non-violent youthful offenders away from the juvenile court system and address underlying factors to reduce the odds of future delinquent or criminal behavior;
6. Funding for a transitional work program coupled with other services to assist ex-offenders move in the right direction;
7. Launching of the violence intervention/focused deterrence model by the D.A.'s office to curtail criminal activity by certain high-risk offenders; and
8. Funding for an in-depth evaluation of the needs of domestic violence victims and identification of any gaps in needed services.

We've attached the Crime Commission 2017 Annual Report. It gives you more detail on the plan, implementation efforts, and the evaluation partnership with the University of Memphis' Public Safety Institute, as well as a look at crime trends for both the city of Memphis and all of Shelby County.

Intentionally, the Crime Commission is dependent on private funding. Since part of our responsibility is to hold public sector stakeholders accountable for implementation of various parts of the Operation: Safe Community plan, we think that independence from public sector funding is important.

Our annual budget is approximately \$950,000, about half of which goes to the University of Memphis to support the research/evaluation component through the Public Safety Institute. We have been blessed with consistent support from key parts of the private sector. While we certainly want to maintain that support, we also want to broaden our base of private sector support. A realistic way of doing that is through the Chamber, which represents a broad array of business entities.

We are asking the Chamber to consider an investment of \$50,000 annually in the operation of the Crime Commission for some period of time so that we don't have to go through your membership approval process every year. We believe such an investment by the Chamber would reflect a clear understanding of the connection between crime reduction and economic, tax base, and population growth in our community. We hope you will be able to act favorably on our request. Please forward to your leadership team on our behalf.

Sincerely,

Ben Adams
Chairman of the Board

Bill Gibbons
President